

the SPS Observer

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THE CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT ISSUE

- + Summit to Crater: Astronomy on the Big Island
- + Turning Sunlight Into Speed
- + Hosting a Physical Sciences Research Symposium
- + Illuminating Quantum with a Hands-On Lab Kit
- + Making Waves at LIGO
- + 2025 SPSCon Snapshots

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Two students face off in a bubble suit wrestling match demonstrating conservation of momentum principles during Physics Field Day at Rhodes College. Photo by Sam Lippe.

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BELONGING:

My Journey with SPS

by Faith Simmons, Associate Zone Councilor for Zone 8, AZC Representative to the SPS Executive Committee, East Tennessee State University

In the summer of 2023, I decided to change my major from education to physics at East Tennessee State University (ETSU). My one goal walking into a new department was to get involved and make myself known. So, when two older students came into my introductory lab advertising a “physics club” meeting, I knew I had to go. When I arrived, someone asked me, “Are you here for SPS?” I stared at them like a deer in headlights. Luckily, another person explained that SPS stood for the Society of Physics Students and that I was in the right place.

When I became involved with SPS, I felt at home. I truly believe that I would not be where I am today, or even still in physics, if it had not been for the community that SPS provided me with.

Toward the end of my first year as a physics major, I attended the Zone 8 Meeting at Southern Illinois University. There I listened to our zone counselor, Professor Richard Prince, talk about different opportunities SPS provides, including hosting zone meetings, being inducted into the Physics and Astronomy Honor Society, Sigma Pi Sigma, and running for associate zone counselor (AZC). I was inspired by the amount of support and resources available to undergraduates.

Recognizing that ETSU did not have a Sigma Pi Sigma chapter, I reached out to the SPS National Office and immediately started the process of establishing a chapter and organizing our inaugural induction ceremony. I am thrilled to say that we inducted eight members in September of 2024, and we are currently planning our second induction ceremony for this spring. Just two weeks after our induction ceremony, we welcomed more than 40 students from eight institutions to campus for the Zone 8 meeting. Hosting a zone meeting was one of the most rewarding experiences of my academic career. It was incredible to witness the connections forming between like-minded students from our region and the community that we built.

This year, I was elected by chapters in my zone to represent the student voice on the SPS National Council as the AZC for Zone 8. In this role, I serve on the Community Building and Belonging Committee and am dedicated to increasing student resources and fellowship.

I recently attended the 2025 Physics and Astronomy Congress in Denver, Colorado—an amazing and insightful experience. Before the conference began, I attended an SPS National Council meeting,

where I met my fellow AZCs and the SPS staff. I am overwhelmed with gratitude to be serving alongside such motivated and caring people. During the Congress, I was elected by the AZCs to represent all SPS students as the AZC representative on the SPS Executive Committee. I am indescribably honored to hold this position, and I am eager to serve as a strong advocate for you, ensuring that every student voice is heard and valued.

I am especially focused on creating a platform for students from underrepresented groups, such as first-generation college students, and for those from small liberal arts schools. I encourage you to reach out to me with any concerns or ideas that I may be able to support. I am here to be your advocate and foster the sense of community that is so vital to our success.

Reflecting on my journey, I’m reminded of how much SPS has shaped both my academic path and my sense of purpose. What began as a simple decision to attend a club meeting has evolved into one of the most transformative experiences of my life. My goal as AZC representative is to pay forward the mentorship and encouragement that helped me find my place in physics.

As I look to the coming year, I hope to continue building bridges between chapters and creating opportunities for collaboration. My vision is that every student, regardless of background, institution size, or access to resources, feel connected to the larger physics and astronomy community. I am excited to see what we can accomplish together as we continue strengthening SPS as a place where every student can belong and thrive. //



ABOVE: Faith Simmons.

Learn more about the SPS National Council at students.aip.org/leadership.

Meet the 2025 SPS Outstanding Chapter Advisor and New SPS President: Ron Kumon



■ ABOVE: Ron Kumon.

by Korena Di Roma Howley, Contributing Editor

As a longtime chapter advisor, zone counselor, and advocate for student leadership, incoming SPS President Ron Kumon knows that engagement and participation are at the heart of a successful student-led organization. Among his goals in his new position, Kumon plans to foster a culture of interactivity between the network of more than 800 SPS chapters and the SPS Office.

“We want to work on ways to improve how we hear from chapters around the country and to make sure that we’re being inclusive to everyone who’s interested in physics and astronomy,” he says.

Currently an associate professor of physics at Kettering University in Flint, Michigan, Kumon earned his BS in physics and mathematics from Michigan State University and

a PhD in physics from the University of Texas at Austin.

“I was interested in physics even as a kid,” he says. Kumon’s father was an electrical engineer and amateur radio operator, and though he initially had an interest in engineering (and became a licensed amateur radio operator himself), Kumon eventually gravitated toward physics and his research area of applied biomedical imaging.

At Kettering, Kumon has served as advisor to award-winning chapters for the past 14 years and has seen firsthand both the impact that chapters can make on students and the surrounding community, and the challenges that student organizations face. These include funding and the cyclical disruptions that can be the result of regular student turnover—or extraordinary events

like the COVID-19 pandemic. “It can be hard to jump-start things once they’ve gone into a lull,” he says.

As an advisor Kumon has come to believe that structure, continuity, and strong student leadership are key to maintaining an effective chapter. To ensure success, he advocates putting helpful practices in place, such as establishing meeting schedules at the beginning of the academic year, planning activities that have worked in the past while being open to new ideas, and keeping abreast of logistics and funding. “Making sure that those things stay in place allows chapters to do what they do best—engage other students,” he says.

As SPS president, Kumon wants to improve how chapters communicate their activities and successes with the SPS

SPS OUTSTANDING CHAPTER ADVISOR

The SPS Outstanding Chapter Advisor Award is the most prestigious award given by SPS, bestowed annually on the basis of the leadership, student leadership development, support, and encouragement the advisor has provided to the chapter. For his leadership and guidance of the SPS chapters at Kettering University, Ron Kumon is the recipient of 2024–25 SPS Outstanding Chapter Advisor Award.

Office—and to make it easier for more chapters to do so.

Some SPS chapters are very active, “but we just don’t hear from them, and we’d like to know what they’re doing,” he says. “Our publications, the SPS Congress, and zone meetings are all great ways to continue doing what we do, but there are several things we want to improve upon.” These include reaching out to more chapters directly and perhaps finding new ways for chapters to report their activities, achievements, and learnings.

Kumon believes departments and faculty play an important role in student engagement and that more can be done to provide camaraderie and esprit de corps among physics majors—which in turn may lead to improved retention. That’s because some of the challenges Kumon recognizes are those faced by the physics and astronomy disciplines as a whole.

“We need to make efforts to reach those chapters that may be in departments under threat and say, ‘Look, this has value,’” he says. “SPS can help you maintain students and recruit students into these majors. That’s one place that SPS can come into play in a real, concrete way.”

Another possibility for maintaining a healthy pipeline of physics majors, Kumon says, is to begin with high school students, making efforts to spark their interest in the field before they reach the university level.

In the meantime, Kumon urges SPS chapters to take advantage of the many resources offered by the SPS Office, including a new website, awards, scholarships, and science outreach catalyst kits (SOCKs). He also recommends that members attend annual zone meetings and get to know their zone councilors, who can act as liaisons for students and help them access available resources.

“We want people to know that the National Office is here to serve chapters and chapter advisors,” he says. “It’s really important that the students make sure to reach out.” //

LEARN MORE

- SPS Awards: students.aip.org/awards
- SPS Scholarships: students.aip.org/scholarships
- SPS SOCKs (Science Outreach Catalyst Kits): students.aip.org/chapter-resources/outreach
- Nominate an Outstanding Advisor: students.aip.org/outstanding-chapter-advisor-award-winners

GET UP TO \$300 FOR AN SPS TRAVEL OR REPORTER AWARD!



Travel and reporter awards can be used for zone meetings, regional meetings, national conferences, and now **visits to national labs!**

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Travel and present your research at professional physics or astronomy meetings. Just show proof of abstract acceptance and presentation!

REPORTER AWARDS:

Attend a professional physics or astronomy meeting, workshop, or training at a national lab and write an article about your experience. Articles may be published in the SPS Observer or Radiations.



For more information and eligibility requirements, visit students.aip.org/awards



Fitting the Pieces TOGETHER

by Korena Di Roma Howley, Contributing Editor

Physics. Math. Economics. Psychology. As a high school student, Charles Wszalek loved learning how it all worked. As a freshman, he began coding, taking every class his school had available. Then, as a physics major at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, he found that coding played a large role in what was required of his studies.

“Being forced to sit down and understand physics through code, like making ray tracing programs for my optics classes, pushed the limits of what I could get my code to do,” he says.

Around the same time, he started using code to solve some of the real-world problems he encountered. In one instance, he wrote a simulation to figure out how to pay down his college debt.

“Being able to explore coding from many different angles while applying it to something difficult like physics gave me the resume I needed to get the job I have today,” he says.

That position is with Wisconsin-based Epic Systems, which develops support software for healthcare organizations. The software includes patient tools like MyChart, as well as programs used by medical providers, labs, and billing departments. As a server systems technical solutions engineer (SS TS), Wszalek ensures that employees who run hospital servers are following best practices. If a problem arises, he’s the software expert who can provide help.

Wszalek is currently undergoing training for his position, a unique role requiring specialized knowledge, such as in the

MUMPS, or M, programming language, Unix administration, and the proprietary systems that Epic has created over the years. For Wszalek, the training has resembled the many computer science classes he enjoyed taking in high school and college.

“The most challenging part has been creating brand new tools from scratch with the vast code base that Epic has created,” he says. “This is because of the sheer amount there is to learn and because it’s so new to me.” In preparing for a highly technical, customer-facing support job like this one, Wszalek says it was important to learn how to accomplish difficult tasks with code and to have a concrete way of demonstrating that experience. “Being able to maintain professional relationships is also a very big thing in customer-facing jobs,” he says.

Once the training is finished, Wszalek will begin his role as a TS. But even with his training completed, Wszalek plans to continue exploring and learning new things.

It’s what he would advise anyone to do.

“I always felt discouraged when reading things about people who found their calling as soon as they were born and then became world-renowned physicists in this field that they loved their whole lives, because that’s not where I was or am,” he says.

Instead, he always felt as though he hadn’t yet found what was right for him and has only recently been able to look back and discern how all the pieces fit together. “Sometimes you don’t know what you’ve found until much later,” he says.



■ ABOVE: Charles Wszalek.

During an SPS summer internship with the American Physical Society’s careers program, Wszalek wrote articles about physics degree holders at all levels who were employed in a variety of careers. “This gave me great insight into the serendipity of many people’s career paths and allowed me to give myself a break with the fact that I had absolutely no idea where I was heading,” he says. “At the time, I was trying to find a path that really spoke to me, but I was having a lot of trouble. A bunch of my friends were finding fields in physics that they were going to commit their lives to, and I was just not there.” Wszalek hoped that writing about physicists with interesting careers would not only help him but also others in his position.

“I’m always just making the most of the situations that I’m in and doing the best that I can,” he says. “My studies definitely led me to where I am today, but not in an obvious way.” //

SPS CHAPTER REPORT

Submission Deadline - **June 15**

Importance of Chapter Reports

- Share your efforts and best practices with other SPS chapters
- Update your chapter contact and leadership information
- Provide guidance for future SPS members in your chapter
- Determine your chapter's strengths and areas for improvement
- Receive feedback and SPS recognition

Qualify for SPS Recognition:

- SPS Outstanding Chapter Awards
- Blake Lilly Prize
- Feature in SPS publications, such as the *SPS Observer*, *JURPA*, or *Radiations*



For more information on Chapter Reports, visit students.aip.org/chapter-resources/chapter-reports

For more information on SPS Chapter Reports, or to update your chapter's officer information, please visit students.aip.org/chapter-resources/chapter-reports.

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Adventures in the **SCIENCE MUSEUM**

by Darshen Meany, SPS Chapter President,
and Daniel Kukla, Past SPS Chapter President,
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities



ABOVE: SPS members from the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities enjoy a trip to the Science Museum of Minnesota. Photo courtesy of the chapter.

BELOW: Students dance the night away during Cornell University's SPS and ExP formal. Photo courtesy of the chapter.

Last spring our SPS chapter at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities took a field trip to the Science Museum of Minnesota, where we spent a few hours wandering around in fascination, learning and relearning. We began by projecting our faces onto an astronaut helmet for the entire museum to see. Most of us pretended to be actual astronauts, while some made odd faces that were hilarious on the big screen. Soon, we split off into smaller groups, eager to explore the museum.

We learned about the physics of the human body while participating in rigorous challenges such as racing an athlete or T-rex on a horizontal screen. We high jumped to see if we could match NBA stars' dunks, and grabbed rope as it fell to measure our reaction time. At one exhibit we tossed balls onto small rings to test our (not great) hand-eye coordination. We attempted to fit into the stomach of a brontosaurus and discovered how ecosystems

are integral to the balance of the world. We ended the day in the butterfly room, learning about insects and how important they are for our environment.

This was an awesome event for our chapter. We had fun exploring all of these topics as people rather than as students ground down by problem sets. We really enjoyed the opportunity to rediscover the magic of science that first enchanted us as kids. //



Fostering BELONGING

by Angelo Phillipe Valencia, SPS Chapter President,
Swarthmore College

Physics and astronomy intersect with identity and culture just like any other human discipline. With two events last year, the Swarthmore SPS chapter aimed to highlight the stories of professors from marginalized communities and diminish the notion of elitism within our scientific community.

For the first event, we collaborated with the Black Cultural Center, a dedicated place of community for Black students, faculty, and professors, to host Physics in Focus: Black Professors @ Swat. During the panel, engineering professor Joseph Towles and physics professor Cacey Bester chatted with student moderators from SPS and SASS (the Swarthmore African-American Student Society) and answered questions from the audience.

We also served hors d'oeuvres from a local Caribbean caterer.

For the second event, we collaborated with ENLACE, the Latine-identifying affinity group at Swarthmore, to host Innovandos Juntos. Math professor Ralph Gomez, environmental science professor Sintana Vergara, and our SPS advisor Jesse Rivera

chatted with student moderators from SPS and ENLACE as attendees enjoyed horchata. One poignant moment was during the Q&A portion of the event, when a student asked, "How do I know if what I am doing is for myself rather than for my parents?" That resonated with many in the audience, including me, a child of immigrant parents.

Both events drew many students, faculty, and professors from various disciplines and departments. The shared experiences fostered a sense of community and understanding, highlighting the importance of diverse backgrounds in shaping individual journeys. //



ABOVE: Panelists at Swarthmore College's Innovandos Juntos pose with student moderators Angelo Phillipe Valencia ('27) and Angela Solorio ('28). Photo by Wilber Valente-Gutierrez.

GET MONEY FOR CHAPTER EVENTS

Future Faces of Physics Awards of up to \$600 are available for chapter programs or events that promote physics and astronomy across cultures. Applications are due November 15 each year. Learn more at students.aip.org/future-faces-of-physics-award.

An Evening of ENLIGHTENMENT

by Emma Linscomb, SPS Chapter Vice President, Abra Geiger, SPS Chapter President, and Bobby Martendal King, SPS Chapter Secretary, Cornell University

In a ballroom lit with candles and adorned by gold and florals, this year's physics formal teleported attendees back to an era that shaped modern physics, the era of enlightenment. Complete with wearable powdered wigs, the end-of-year celebration was planned by a joint committee of Cornell SPS members and members of ExP, Cornell's Applied Engineering Physics Society.

Aspiring physicists and engineers work hard on intense research projects and demanding classes. SPS and ExP exist to foster community and growth in physics and related fields, and we've found a formal to be the perfect way to bring everyone

together and celebrate their hard work. It takes much planning and there's lots of red tape related to the Student Business Office and Large Event Funding Grants, but it is certainly worth the effort.

We had such a memorable evening. Highlights included a photo booth featuring very fancy and on-theme props, including an ornate golden picture frame and a life-size cutout of Sir Issac Newton, as well as custom stickers, commemorative fridge magnets, physics-themed raffles, and much more. After everyone grabbed their food and goodies, and once the raffle boxes were bulging at the seams, we all took to the dance floor and rocked out to music from the DJ. //

SUMMIT TO CRATER: *Astronomy on the Big Island*

by Stephen Wagner, SPS Chapter President, and Lio Tay, SPS Chapter Secretary, University of Hawai'i Mānoa

After huddling in the Honolulu airport in anticipation, our group of SPS members from University of Hawai'i (UH) Mānoa boarded a 40-minute morning flight to Hilo, which is on the Big Island. From the air we could spot one of the great telescopes perched atop Mauna Kea—a glimpse of what awaited us.

Once we landed, we were joined by a faculty advisor, along with graduate students Luke Benavitz and Sage Constantinou from the Institute for Astronomy (IfA). They picked us up from the airport, and together we began the scenic drive up the mountain to Hale Pōhaku, the midlevel facility for those working on Mauna Kea's observatories. There, we had lunch together under the bright sun. The air was crisp, the sky crystal clear, and the silence of the mountain made the place feel almost otherworldly—as if we were standing in heaven itself.

Hale Pōhaku, located at 9,200 feet above sea level, helps visitors acclimate to the high altitude of Mauna Kea's summit, which rises to an astonishing 13,796 feet. After resting, we were joined by the director of the IfA and Mary Beth Laychak, internship coordinator for Maunakea Observatories. Together, we caravanned to the summit, beginning our tour at the W. M. Keck Observatory, home to the Keck I and II 10-meter telescopes. Standing inside the massive dome was awe-inspiring.

Next, we visited NASA's Infrared Telescope Facility (IRTF), where astronomers were actively observing Jupiter. The IfA director explained how IRTF operates and shared its history before we went inside the dome to see the telescope up

close. Finally, we saw CFHT, the Canada–France–Hawaii Telescope. Mary Beth guided us through the facility and shared stories about its operations before we headed back down to Hale Pōhaku. After dinner we returned to the summit to watch the sunset from Mauna Kea, a breathtaking sight with a view of the sky painted in surreal colors.

The following day, we departed Mauna Kea and stopped for a short hike before visiting IfA Hilo, where we received a tour of the facility and saw ongoing research. We then headed to the UH Hilo Department of Physics and Astronomy, where we met several faculty members and learned about the program. Afterward, we made our way to Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, home to Kīlauea—the most active volcano in the Hawaiian Islands. While there we explored various trails, including the Nāhuku Lava Tube, a giant underground tunnel formed by ancient lava flows. After sunset we saw the glowing lava inside the Halema'uma'u crater lighting up the night sky.

On our final day, we hiked the Kīlauea Iki Trail, explored downtown Hilo, and visited the 'Imiloa Astronomy Center, which beautifully blends Hawaiian culture and modern astronomy. As we flew back to Honolulu, we caught sight of the Haleakalā Observatory's domes on Maui from the plane window—a fitting farewell to an unforgettable trip.

Sharing this journey with fellow physics and astronomy students, faculty, and alumni was an incredible experience. For many of us, especially the seniors graduating soon after, it was a meaningful final adventure together. We'll always treasure

the memories of this trip and hope to return to Mauna Kea again. //



TOP: University of Hawai'i Mānoa SPS students take a selfie on Mauna Kea while touring a telescope. Photo by Lio Tay.

ABOVE: A view of the sunset from atop Mauna Kea, one of the tallest mountains in the world. Photo by Sage Constantinou.

Building Community UNDER THE NIGHT SKY

by Leo Illing, Past Associate Zone Councilor Representative to the SPS Executive Committee, Santa Clara University

Last year the SPS chapter at Santa Clara University partnered with our university's outdoor club, Into the Wild, to organize a unique and memorable overnight event. Early one morning, ready to get out of the lab and into nature, we loaded into the outdoor club's vans and began our journey with coffee, silly introductions, and car jams.

We started our adventure at the beach city Carmel-by-the-Sea, where we embarked on a short coastal day hike. We then spent a couple of hours relaxing on the beach, swimming, and playing frisbee. But the best was yet to come. We caravanned up winding roads to Fremont Peak State Park to camp and set up two telescopes. As night fell, all of us converged around the instruments, many experiencing Saturn's rings or Jupiter's moons for the first time. Some simply sat on picnic tables looking up, soaking in the stars. As the nighttime chill set in, we started a campfire and roasted marshmallows. The evening was peaceful and full of awe.

What made the event so special wasn't just the divine scenery, however. It was conversations on the car ride, laughter on the beach, and philosophical reflections under the stars. Physics majors spend a lot of time together, but it's usually around whiteboards and problem sets. This break gave us a chance to break free and really get to know each other. It also served as an opportunity to interact with students from other majors. Physics can demand an intense singular focus, especially on the quarter system. Events like this counteract that. They remind us of the joys of human interaction and of the natural world.

What made the night even more memorable was that one of our professors joined us at the top of Fremont Peak. He brought

his wife and young child with him, along with his own telescope. Seeing him outside the classroom, bundled up in warm clothes and showing students his favorite constellations, was a really special experience. Our professors are such an important part of our undergraduate experience, yet we rarely get the opportunity to see the real them and show them the real us.

During a year of exams, research, and stress, this event stood out not for being the most challenging or academic, but for being the most human. It showed what SPS can be when we allow physics to lead us somewhere new, not just into scientific discovery but also into the development of community.

We hope to make this an annual trip. It is, for me, one of the most cherished memories of my undergraduate years. Stars, strangers becoming friends, and a shared sense of wonder—it doesn't get any more beautiful than that. //



TOP: The moon shines over Fremont Peak.

ABOVE: Santa Clara University SPS members prepare for the cold night ahead. Photos courtesy of the chapter.

THE SPS OBSERVER WANTS TO SHOWCASE YOUR CHAPTER

Invest in the future of your chapter and let the SPS National Office know what you've been up to by submitting your SPS chapter report this spring. Select chapters will be invited to share their activities with SPS broadly. For details visit students.aip.org/chapter-resources/chapter-reports.

Recapturing RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES



by Max Watzky and Diya Naik, SPS Chapter Co-Presidents, and Kane Trundle, SPS Chapter Liaison to SPS National, Yale University

ABOVE: Upper-level physics majors at Yale University help new students pick physics courses during a “bluebooking” event. Photo courtesy of the chapter.

Many physics students cultivate research skills through summer programs at their home institution, Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REUs), and lab internships. During our weekly snack-fueled study halls, Yale students painstakingly write and edit application essays for these opportunities, as well as share recommendations.

In the spring of 2025, after the current administration severely cut National Science Foundation funding, several US institutions reduced or cut their REU programs. Some programs, such as a women-specific internship at Fermilab, disappeared almost

overnight, while other programs, such as Cornell University’s astrophysics and planetary science REU, initially accepted students and later canceled the positions.

While Yale offers a fellowship for on-campus research, by the time other institutions started issuing cancelations, the deadline had already passed. Many of our students were left without summer research positions. This spurred our SPS chapter to work closely with physics professor Paul Tipton and the Dean’s Office to extend Yale’s Research Fellowship deadline. We were successful, giving more students the opportunity to secure summer research.

Our contributions, particularly through the efforts of SPS members Max Watzky, Nikita Mazotov, and Diya Naik, were recognized by the *Yale Daily News*.

In the coming year, SPS chapters must be attuned to how we can best guide students, including international and minority students, on navigating applications for research opportunities, graduate school, fellowships, and grants in the face of legislation that reduces funding for science. //

PUBLISH YOUR RESEARCH

The *Journal of Undergraduate Reports in Physics and Astronomy* (JURPA) is an SPS journal of peer-reviewed papers by undergraduate researchers. A print version is published every summer. Manuscripts must be submitted by March 15 for print consideration. Learn more at students.aip.org/jurpa.

GET FUNDING FOR CONFERENCE TRAVEL

- SPS Travel Awards offer partial travel support for SPS members to attend and present their research at national meetings of professional societies in the AIP federation and SPS zone meetings. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Learn more at students.aip.org/sps-travel-award.
- SPS Reporter Awards offer partial travel support for SPS chapters or individual members to attend and report on professional physics meetings for SPS publications. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Learn more at students.aip.org/sps-reporter-award.

Making Waves at LIGO



by Armaan Khanuja, Past SPS Chapter Secretary, and Lyra Moscuzza, Zone 17 Associate Zone Councilor and Past SPS Chapter President, Green River College

ABOVE: A scenic view of LIGO's 4-km-long interferometer arm. Photo by Lyra Moscuzza.

What do you get when students with no event planning experience host a regional conference at one of the most remote research facilities in their state?

An unforgettable SPS zone meeting.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, interest in physics at our community college declined. In 2023–24 our SPS chapter meeting attendance dropped to zero. Thankfully, due to the advertising efforts of the physics faculty, a small group of passionate physics and engineering students took charge of our chapter at the beginning of the 2024–25 school year, and we turned it around completely. Through weekly meetings and events such as pumpkin drops, star parties, and movie nights, our regular attendance quickly tripled in size—and we had even more people attending special events!

Even though we had never hosted a zone meeting before, we accepted an invitation to host the Zone 17 Meeting in the spring of 2025. We knew this would be a challenge for us. Not only were all our SPS officers new and inexperienced, the event would also be taking place halfway across the state at LIGO's Hanford site. LIGO stands for the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory and, in 2015, it captured the first direct observation of gravitational waves. We were super excited for this opportunity and knew we could handle it.

Working with the SPS Zone 17 counselor at the time, Deanna Marshall from Central Washington University, we set the schedule, organized the food, and reached out to chapters in our region. We spent a month planning the event. It wasn't always easy, but in the end, everything was ready.

Finally, the day arrived! We brought together more than 15 attendees from Green River College, Gonzaga University, the University of Washington Bothell,

SPS CHAPTERS ON *Professional Development*



and Central Washington University. After check-in, we began with a presentation given by Marshall on opportunities available through SPS, such as scholarships, internships, and awards. This was followed by a detailed presentation given by LIGO staff on the observatory's history, operations, and research.

After the presentation, we went on a tour of LIGO. We were fortunate to be there on a day when operations were offline, so we had the unique opportunity to see inside the facilities in addition to viewing the exterior sections. A laser interferometer works by measuring interference patterns in light waves that occur after splitting a beam of light along two perpendicular paths and reflecting them back. By using 4-km-long arms, LIGO can measure precise changes in distance between its mirrors—down to 1/10,000th of the width of a proton.

After our tour, we enjoyed socializing during a lunch break. It was really great to meet fellow physics students and see what kind of research they were doing! Then we headed into a closing presentation on



TOP: SPS Zone 17 Meeting attendees pose for a group photo at LIGO. Photo by Deanna Marshall.

ABOVE: A rare glimpse into LIGO's inner workings. Photo by Armaan Khanuja.

SPSCon given by Marshall, before finishing the meeting with a formal chapter check-in discussion.

While the meeting location was hard for some chapters to reach due to its remote nature, the event was awesome! We got

to meet so many cool people and learn about so many opportunities. Attending a zone meeting—and maybe even planning one—is definitely something every SPS member should do at least once during their time as an undergraduate. //

SPS ZONE MEETINGS

Zone meetings bring together SPS students from within a geographic region. They're fun and inspiring ways to meet other students, present research, and interact with practicing scientists. See which zone you're in and find a list of upcoming meetings at students.aip.org/chapter-resources/zone-meetings.

EQUIPPING STUDENTS THROUGH *Alumni Panels*

by Naaz Shafeer, Rhea Richards, Elizabeth Kunz, Dominic Pang, Kristi Skane, Isaac Mottern, Mowen Zhao, and Dwaipayan Chanda, SPS Members, University of Southern California

Our SPS chapter at the University of Southern California (USC) hosted the Zone 18 Meeting this past spring. In addition to lab tours, a fierce physics trivia competition on Kahoot!, and keynotes on exoplanets and topological phenomena in condensed matter physics, one of the highlights was our undergraduate-hosted panels.



ABOVE: Zone 18 Meeting attendees pose for a group photo. Photo by Naaz Shafeer.

A Women in Physics+ panel, led by SPS member Kristi Skane, was creatively structured so that women and other gender minorities could share their experiences in physics and astronomy at various stages of the academic career path—undergraduate, graduate, and faculty member. This allowed attendees to hear a diverse set of perspectives, and we hope they left feeling encouraged to venture bravely into their passions. Meanwhile, other attendees enjoyed a fun bonding session with a game of physics charades—although some of the terms, such as “Floquet” and “topological insulators,” proved challenging to explain or act out.

Everyone reconvened for our second panel, a physics graduate student panel hosted by SPS member Rhea Richards. Many physics undergraduates are unsure of the path they’d like to take after graduating. We found that hearing advice from those a little further along their paths helped current undergraduates better understand what they want out of their careers. It also provided undergraduates with a chance to ask questions about grad school and the application process and to hear the perspectives of those who recently experienced both. Deciding what your future holds can be daunting. We hope this panel alleviated some of that stress and helped attendees decide whether grad school is a path they would like to consider. //

Hosting a Physical Sciences **RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM**

by Claire Atkinson, SPS Chapter President, University of Washington

The University of Washington (UW) is known for research, and many members of our chapter contribute to this legacy. Each spring students at the three UW campuses are invited to showcase their research during an undergraduate research symposium. The symposium is usually crowded and noisy in the best way, indicating the sharing of knowledge, but it can be difficult to find the physics poster presentations scattered throughout campus.

This year our SPS chapter hosted a physics-specific symposium, a smaller event held a few weeks before the campus-wide symposium, to give undergraduates the opportunity to practice their presentations and to bring the department closer together.

The Research Symposium for the Physical Sciences took place on a beautiful sunny day in late April. Eight oral presentations, seven poster presentations, and four lightning talks made for four hours of awesome science! Both the oral and poster presentation sessions were well attended, with a consistent trickle of people coming and going.

The weeks of planning we put into this event felt small compared to its significant impact. Students shared their work with an enthusiastic audience, presenters received valuable feedback before the campus-wide symposium, all participants made new connections, and the UW physics department community grew stronger as a result. //



ABOVE: Attendees explore posters at the SPS Research Symposium for the Physical Sciences at the University of Washington. Photo by Pine Dysart-Bricken.



TURNING SUNLIGHT *Into Speed*

by Demi Held, SPS Chapter President, Austin College

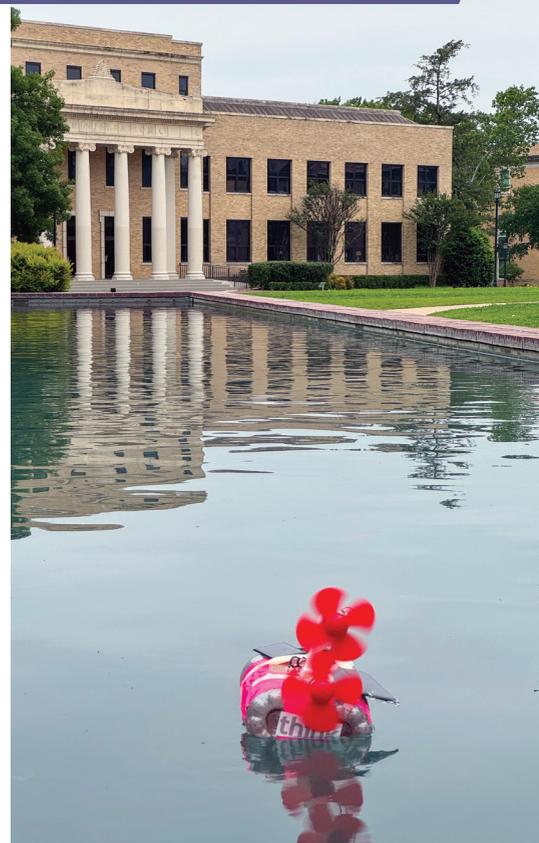
Many campus organizations hosted events on climate change last year, leading up to the convocation of the 2025 Austin College Poset Leader-in-Residence Award recognizing Katharine Hayhoe, chief scientist for the Nature Conservancy. After months of deliberating, our SPS chapter knew that to gather a large turnout and motivate learning, we needed to design a competition.

Boats. This strange pitch was made during one of our weekly meetings. After spending February and March discussing solar-powered car kits, we decided to be even MORE creative: Let's take solar panels . . . and recyclables . . . and make boats.

Where were we going to race? In the school's celebration fountains, of course. We worked with campus police and our campus management team to turn off the fountain sprayers, creating a perfect straightaway track.

SPS officers took to soldering together simple circuits composed of solar panels, DC motors, and supercapacitors. The goal was to charge the super caps via the solar panels so that, at the flip of a switch—or the start of the race—the caps would begin to discharge, acting as a speed boost. After this approximately 45-second speed boost, the boats would continue running on power directly from the solar panels.

Hosting a solar-powered event in the spring was more challenging than we thought. We were rained out twice, and our third event day was partially cloudy. The cloudiness, however, did not hinder our circuits—or our lesson! //



LEFT: SPS members at Austin College prepare to race their boats. Photos courtesy of the chapter.

ABOVE: A boat takes off during the big race at Austin College.

WHO WILL YOU RECOGNIZE FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO SPS?

SPS Outstanding Service Awards acknowledge outstanding chapter leaders—students, faculty, and staff—who further the mission of SPS and aim to support the health of the organization and the broader community through service. Chapter members can nominate candidates at any time. For details, see students.aip.org/sps-outstanding-service-award.

A Night of CREATIVE CONTRAPTIONS

by Jahzeel Martinez, SPS Chapter Outreach Coordinator, Drexel University

Physics, camaraderie, and just the right amount of controlled chaos met in a new Drexel University SPS chapter event: Construction Night.

Armed with miniature wooden siege engine kits from National Geographic, we gathered to assemble bombards, catapults, ballistae, and whatever else the evening's engineering whims inspired. The event was open to all and drew around 13 attendees, which, for our chapter, felt like Woodstock with pizza.

The participants included a mix of physics majors, curious passersby, and first-time attendees who, by the end of the night, were enthusiastically flinging projectiles and asking when the next event

would be. (No ceiling tiles were harmed, though several reputations for aim were left in question.)

Who won? We all won. That's how physics works sometimes.

Fueling all this kinetic creativity was some of the best pizza we've ever had at an SPS event. Between bites and builds, participants swapped ideas for future events, shared textbook tips and academic survival strategies, and began imagining new chapter traditions. Construction Night planted the seed for more game nights and informal gatherings, all in the same spirit and with the same goal: making physics fun, low-stress, and welcoming for everyone.



ABOVE: A siege engine takes shape during Construction Night, an event hosted by Drexel University's SPS chapter. Photo by Jahzeel Martinez. For more photos, check out the chapter's Instagram account, [instagram.com/spsdrexel](https://www.instagram.com/spsdrexel).

At its core, this event was about more than just launching tiny objects at our unsuspecting friends. It was about building momentum for our chapter, strengthening bonds between students, and turning a simple evening of kits and snacks into something students remembered and wanted to be part of again. //

Physics Wins First Annual Pi Day PIE-EATING CONTEST

by León Garcia, SPS Chapter President, Stanford University



On March 14 at exactly 3:14 p.m., the Stanford University Physics Society and Stanford University Mathematical Organization cohosted their first annual Pi Day Pie-Eating Contest. Over 150 students and faculty attended, including math department alum and university president Jon Levin, who served as the celebrity judge.

When the buzzer sounded, five-person teams from each department competed to devour a full 4 lb, 12 oz apple berry pie as fast as possible. Physics claimed victory in just 3 minutes and 9 seconds, and their winning pie tin signed by President Levin is now on display in the Physics Department main office. After the competition, attendees enjoyed free pie and socialized. //

TOP: Attendees put the pie in Pi Day at Stanford University.

LEFT: The Stanford physics team digs into their nearly 5-lb apple berry pie! Photos by Khoi Huynh.

Partnering with a **CHILDREN'S MUSEUM** *to Build Curiosity*

by Sean Currier, SPS Chapter President,
Sacramento State University

Last year our SPS chapter at Sacramento State initiated a transformative and community-focused partnership with the Sacramento Children's Museum (SCM). The program is a unique collaboration between university students, faculty, and a local nonprofit organization dedicated to early childhood education.

Recognizing the importance of early exposure to STEM, our SPS chapter worked with SCM leadership and faculty mentors to develop a program that empowers Sacramento State physics students to design and build interactive science exhibits for children ages 3 to 8. These exhibits aim to introduce basic scientific principles through tactile, visual, and experiential learning—ensuring that complex ideas like gravity, motion, and magnetism are accessible and fun.

To kick off the initiative, SPS members toured the museum, engaged with education coordinators, and collected feedback on existing exhibits. Then, over the semester, our student teams used this input to brainstorm and prototype new exhibit concepts, many of which were grounded in mechanics and electromagnetism. These ideas were workshopped during SPS meetings, tested in the lab, and

reviewed in collaboration with museum staff for safety, accessibility, and educational value.

WHAT MAKES THIS INITIATIVE STAND OUT IS ITS MUTUAL BENEFIT:

- For the museum, it brings new and custom-built STEM content tailored to young learners.
- For our students, it offers hands-on design and fabrication experience, collaborative project development, and opportunities to practice science communication with the public.
- For the university, it deepens community engagement and highlights the practical, human impact of a physics education.

Beyond the educational value, this program also provides paid internships for students who commit to building and maintaining exhibits over time, giving Sacramento State students valuable workforce experience in science outreach, engineering, and education. The program is poised to continue growing into a permanent fixture of our department's outreach, offering recurring opportunities for students in physics and beyond.

As a chapter, we are incredibly proud of this initiative—both for its ambition and reach and because it reflects the spirit of service, creativity, and scientific curiosity that defines SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma. It's an enduring example of how physics students can make science fun, accessible, and meaningful to the next generation. //

APPLY FOR AN SPS SCHOLARSHIP

SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma award several scholarships each year to students who are active in SPS, demonstrate excellence in academics, and meet additional criteria as specified in the application. Applications are due March 15 each year. Learn more at students.aip.org/scholarships.

The TEAM-UP Together Scholarship Program offers financial support to promising undergraduates pursuing bachelor's degrees in physics and astronomy, including those who face the starkest barriers to success, with a focus on African American students.

These annual awards of up to \$10,000 help alleviate financial barriers preventing some students from completing their undergraduate degree. Students can reapply each year they are an undergraduate. For eligibility requirements and deadlines, please visit teamuptogether.org/scholarship.

BELOW: The Sacramento State SPS chapter visits the McClellan Nuclear Research Facility. Photo courtesy of the chapter.



RUN FOR THE SPS COUNCIL!

ARE YOU READY TO LEAD AND MAKE AN IMPACT IN THE PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY COMMUNITY?



Why Join the SPS National Council?

Leadership Development: Represent and serve as a resource for SPS members in your region.

Professional Growth: Gain valuable leadership training and expand your network.

Exclusive Opportunities: Travel to Washington, DC, for the annual SPS Council Meeting. Participate in premier events like the Physics and Astronomy Congress.

How to Get Involved: Nominate yourself or someone you know!

Nominations close March 15.

Take the next step in your journey. Join a community of passionate leaders shaping the future of physics and astronomy. Learn more at students.aip.org/leadership/sps-council-nominations.



Find us @SPSNational:      



Magnet Demos TURN CURIOSITY INTO COMMUNITY

by Maggie Fuller, SPS Chapter
President, University of Houston

The Science Show and Tell was a highlight of last year for our SPS chapter at the University of Houston (UH). We held the event at the beginning of the spring semester and invited students to present short, engaging talks or live demonstrations about anything science related—research projects, favorite physics phenomena, or just something that made them say “Wow.” Then, we invited the campus community to attend.

What made this event truly shine was the overwhelming interdisciplinary turnout. Students from across departments—biology, chemistry, computer science, engineering, even art—came to experience the buzz, with many drawn in by word of mouth that we had “cool magnet demos.” Thanks to the Texas Center for Superconductivity at UH (TcSUH), we featured hands-on demonstrations that let attendees feel the physics in real time: superconductive levitation using liquid nitrogen and



ABOVE: University of Houston’s Maggie Fuller demonstrates Lenz’s law with an LED, copper wires, a solenoid, and a magnet during the Science Show and Tell. Photo courtesy of Diksha Chaurasia.

YBCO (yttrium barium copper oxide) disks, Lenz’s law in action with magnetic braking, and Faraday’s law visualized through shifting magnetic fields and coiled copper wires.

This event exemplified our chapter’s mission to create an inclusive, engaging, and community-centered environment where anyone with a love for science—regardless of major—could explore, experiment, and share in the joy of discovery. The energy in the room was electric, and it reminded us why outreach within our own campus is just as important as external engagement.

In addition, our presenters gained valuable experience communicating scientific concepts to a broad audience, and it gave many of them a confidence boost ahead of conference season.

We’re already planning for an even bigger version next year—and yes, the magnets will be back. //

Engaging High School Students with **Lab4Kids**

by Amanda Bowen and Luis Rodriguez, SPS Members, and
Matthew Wright, SPS Chapter Advisor, Adelphi University

This year, our Adelphi University Lab4Kids program, funded by PhysTEC, visited 11 high schools across New York City and Long Island, and we had a few schools visit our university as well. The goal of the program, which includes SPS chapter

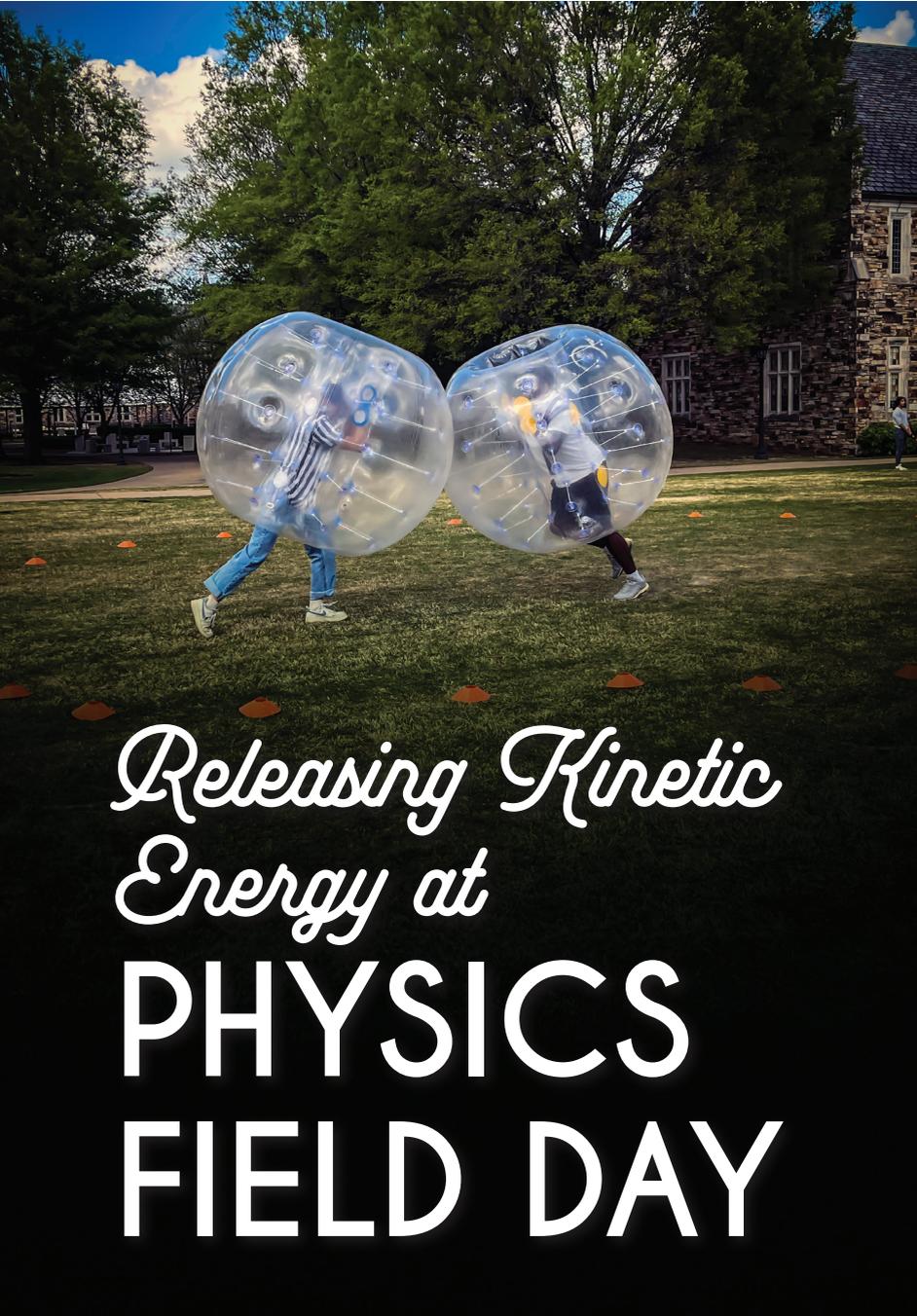
members and Adelphi faculty, is to get high schoolers interested in physics and, hopefully, consider it something they could see themselves doing in the future. We do this by making science fun and engaging for them, including by doing experiments.

We also make sure that the high school students have the opportunity to interact with us undergraduate students, to ask questions and receive honest answers from those recently in their shoes. They typically inquire about school life, the difficulty level of classes, and other aspects of higher education.

Not only is Lab4Kids beneficial to high school students, but it’s also valuable for our SPS chapter members. For undergraduate physics majors at Adelphi, there are few opportunities to teach. Lab4Kids gives us this experience, and we hope that we spark the minds of many young physicists and encourage them to further pursue their interests along the way. //

GET MONEY FOR CHAPTER OUTREACH EVENTS

Marsh White Awards of up to \$600 are available for chapter programs or events that promote an interest in physics or astronomy among students or the general public. Applications are due November 15 each year. Learn more at students.aip.org/marsh-white-award.



by Ada Collins, Kate Hazelwood, and Layla Lammers, SPS Members, Rhodes College

On a sunny Friday in April, the Rhodes College SPS chapter turned our campus quad into a hub of physics and fun for our annual Physics Field Day for the campus community. Over 100 students joined the festivities, featuring bubble-suit sumo wrestling, a T-shirt cannon challenge, a three-way tug-of-war, and water balloon obstacle courses—all designed to showcase the physics principles behind each game.

Weeks of planning by the Field Day Organization Committee went into creating the event, from testing activity prototypes to securing 200 hot dogs and recruiting volunteer referees. Cross-club collaborations made the day even more dynamic—Healing Harmony hosted a “paint-by-catapult” station, promoting creativity and mental wellness, while the Middle Eastern Students Association’s Bazaar brought vibrant food, music, and culture to the celebration.

The most popular attraction was bubble-suit sumo wrestling, where students collided in inflatable suits, putting conservation of momentum to the test (and to laughter). Whether competing or cheering, everyone enjoyed the light-hearted yet educational spirit of the day.

Now in its second year, Physics Field Day has become a signature SPS event at Rhodes, reminding participants that physics isn’t confined to the classroom—it’s a joyful, hands-on pursuit that can bring the campus community together. //

ABOVE LEFT: Two students face off in a bubble suit wrestling match demonstrating conservation of momentum principles during Physics Field Day at Rhodes College. Photo by Sam Lippe.

LEFT: In a fun spin on traditional tug-of-war, students use their knowledge of force vectors to win in a three-way competition. Photo courtesy of Brent Hoffmeister.



Powered by CURIOSITY

by Melanie Miles, Megan Gee, Jacob Osmun, and Mitchell Palmer, SPS Members, Brigham Young University

Our SPS chapter at Brigham Young University (BYU) joined the Department of Mathematics to host Discover STEM, a community event aimed at introducing fifth and sixth graders—and their families—to the wonders of science, technology, engineering, and math. Held on campus, the event brought together students, parents, and faculty for an evening of hands-on exploration and discovery.

We represented the physics department with a series of interactive demos, including a Bernoulli blower, electricity experiments, and an especially popular electromagnet tug-of-war challenge. Kids were amazed to see magnetic fields and air pressure come to life before their eyes, and many returned to the booth multiple times to conduct experiments and ask more questions.

The event also strengthened connections both within our chapter and across departments. Members who don't often attend meetings came out to help, and the collaboration with the math department created a lively, interdisciplinary atmosphere that reminded everyone how interconnected STEM fields truly are.

For the chapter, Discover STEM was more than outreach—it was a moment to reconnect with the joy of physics. Watching young students light up reinforced why sharing science matters and how community engagement brings new energy to the group. After such a successful night, we are looking forward to expanding our outreach and continuing to inspire future scientists. //



TOP: Brigham Young University (BYU) SPS members demonstrate the Bernoulli blower for a group of elementary school students at Discover STEM.

ABOVE: A group of young STEM enthusiasts explore electricity and magnetism demonstrations with BYU SPS members. Photos Courtesy of Megan Gee.

ILLUMINATING QUANTUM *with a Hands-On Lab Kit*

by Leah Reid with Kevin O'Shea, Zain Zaidi, and Leslie Yan, SPS Project Team, Stony Brook University

Quantum information science is advancing quickly, with breakthroughs in quantum computing, communication, and simulation poised to reshape the future of technology. But the counterintuitive nature of quantum mechanics—combined with the lack of affordable, hands-on tools—makes it difficult for students to explore these concepts early in their education. In most high schools, quantum mechanics is either absent

from the physics curriculum or briefly introduced through lectures on historic experiments. Rarely do students get to see quantum phenomena in action, much less explore them through interactive demonstrations.

To address this, the Stony Brook University SPS chapter launched a unique outreach project supported by an SPS Marsh W. White Award. Our team designed and built low-cost

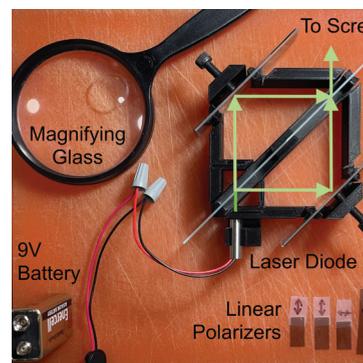
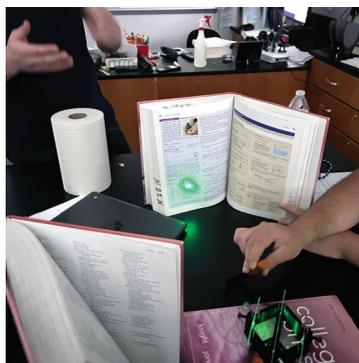
Mach-Zehnder interferometer lab kits that enable students to explore the quantum world. The project builds on the previous year's outreach effort, in which we used interferometer kits to demonstrate classical interference. Through this year's kits, our chapter hopes to make modern physics concepts more tangible to students and build their intuition. The kits invite students to explore superposition, entanglement analogs, and the quantum eraser.

The quantum eraser experiment reveals one of quantum mechanics' most fascinating ideas: simply knowing "which path" a photon takes through an apparatus can destroy interference, but "erasing" that information restores it. Using a Mach-Zehnder interferometer—an optical setup that splits and recombines a beam of light—students can watch this concept play out in real time. By adding polarizers to distinguish or obscure the photon's path, the interference pattern vanishes or reappears, illustrating how the presence or absence of information determines the outcome. Though the kits use laser light and can be described classically, the effect is directly analogous to the single-photon case, giving students an intuitive understanding of one of physics' most subtle principles.

To make the project accessible, we kept production costs low. Instead of relying on professional-grade optics, we manufactured every component in-house using affordable materials. Each kit includes beam splitters made from microscope slides, mirrors created through chemical silvering, and a 3D-printed frame that requires no complex assembly. Laser diodes, polarizing film, and magnifying glasses complete the setup—all for under \$30 per kit, compared to thousands for commercial alternatives.

In late May and early June, SPS members visited three high schools across Long Island and New York City, leading more than 60 students in interactive lessons on interference, polarization, and quantum mechanics. Students were divided into lab groups to run the experiments themselves, with SPS volunteers offering guidance and answering questions. The hands-on activities were met with excitement and curiosity—one student even exclaimed, "I finally get it!" after seeing the results firsthand.

Teachers expressed interest in reproducing the kits for their own classrooms, and one student heading to Stony Brook asked how to get involved with SPS. Encouraged by the success, our chapter plans to publish full instructions and CAD files so any high school—or SPS chapter—can build its own kit. For Stony Brook SPS, this project proved that with creativity and collaboration, even quantum mechanics can become tangible, affordable, and fun. //



TOP LEFT: Students at W. C. Mepham High School observe interference fringes with their interferometer lab kit, guided by an SPS student. Photo by Zain Zaidi.

TOP RIGHT: The components of the Stony Brook SPS chapter's quantum eraser lab kit. The laser diode, mirrors, and beam splitters are mounted in the 3D-printed frame. Also shown are the linear polarizers and the magnifying glass used as a lens to observe interference fringes. Photo by Leah Reid.

ABOVE: SPS students provide context for the activity at the Bronx High School of Science. Photo by Zain Zaidi.

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HAVE YOU DEVELOPED A COOL LAB APPARATUS OR EXPERIMENT?

The SPS-AAAPT-ALPhA Undergraduate Award for Outstanding Laboratory Development recognizes outstanding work in developing an advanced laboratory apparatus or experiment by an undergraduate physics student. Awardees are invited to present at an American Association of Physics Teachers meeting, receive travel funding to attend with a faculty member, and receive an honorarium along with their department. Applications are due November 15 each year. For details, see students.aip.org/awards.

2025 SPSCon Snapshots



ABOVE: The 2025 Physics and Astronomy Congress brought together more than 1,000 participants—primarily undergraduate students, alongside their advisors, alumni, and members of the broader physics and astronomy community—for an unforgettable gathering. From inspiring plenary talks by renowned leaders in the field to a bustling graduate and career fair, record-breaking poster and art submissions, and an epic dance party to close it all out, this year's congress truly had it all. Stay tuned for more coverage and reflections on the congress in the Spring 2026 issue of the *SPS Observer*.



2024-25 SPS Outstanding Chapter Awards

SPS Outstanding, Distinguished, and Notable Chapters are determined each year by the SPS Council through careful review of the SPS chapter reports. Designations are made based on chapter involvement in local, zone, and national SPS meetings, participation in SPS programs, outreach efforts, student recruitment, and interaction with their department and department alumni. To earn these designations, SPS chapters are encouraged to stay active and engaged by participating in an array of activities. Sample activities can be found in the SPS Information Handbook, available at students.aip.org/chapter-resources. SPS chapter reports are due June 15th each year.

OUTSTANDING CHAPTERS

Zone 1

Harvard University
Tufts University
University of Maine
University of Massachusetts
Dartmouth
Worcester Polytechnic
University
Yale University

Zone 2

Adelphi University
Buffalo State University
Cornell University
New York University
Rensselaer Polytechnic
Institute
Stony Brook University
University of Rochester

Zone 3

Gettysburg College
Juniata College
Stevens Institute of
Technology
Swarthmore College

Zone 4

George Washington
University
Howard University
Johns Hopkins
University

Radford University
Randolph College
Towson University
University of Maryland
College Park
University of Virginia
Virginia Tech

Zone 5

Appalachian State University
Clemson University
Davidson College
Francis Marion University

Zone 6

Emory University
Florida State
University

Zone 7

Cleveland State University
Grove City College
Hope College
Kettering University A
Kettering University B
Marietta College
Marshall University

Zone 8

Berea College
East Tennessee State
University

Southern Adventist
University
University of Tennessee
Chattanooga

Zone 9

Augustana College
Lewis University
University of Wisconsin –
River Falls

Zone 10

Louisiana Tech University
Rhodes College

Zone 11

Bethel College
Coe College
South Dakota School of
Mines & Technology

Zone 12

Oklahoma State University

Zone 13

Abilene Christian University
Angelo State University
Austin College
University of Houston
University of Texas at Dallas

Zone 14

Colorado School of Mines

Colorado State University
University of Colorado
Denver

Zone 15

Brigham Young University
University of Utah
Utah State University

Zone 16

Arizona State University

Zone 17

Green River College
University of
Washington

Zone 18

California State University,
Sacramento
Santa Clara University
Stanford University
University of California,
Berkeley
University of California,
Irvine
University of California San
Diego
University of San Diego
University of Southern
California

DISTINGUISHED CHAPTERS

Zone 1

Massachusetts Institute of
Technology

Zone 2

CUNY The City College of
New York
Manhattan University
Sarah Lawrence College
Siena College

Zone 3

Bryn Mawr College

Lycoming College
New Jersey Institute of
Technology
Rowan University
Rutgers University – New
Brunswick
Saint Joseph's University

Zone 4

College of William &
Mary
Old Dominion
University

University of Duhok
University of
Richmond

Zone 5

East Carolina University
University of North Carolina
at Asheville
University of North Carolina
at Chapel Hill

Zone 6

University of West Florida

Zone 7

Case Western Reserve
University
College of Wooster
Indiana University of
Pennsylvania
John Carroll University
Lawrence Technological
University
Ohio University
University of Pittsburgh

DISTINGUISHED CHAPTERS CONT.**Zone 8**

Austin Peay State University
Tennessee Technological University
University of Louisville

Zone 9

University of Illinois Chicago
University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire

Zone 10

University of Central Arkansas

Zone 11

Augsburg University
Augustana University

Zone 12

Pittsburg State University
William Jewell College

Zone 13

East Texas A&M University
McMurry University
San Antonio College
Texas A&M University – Kingsville
Texas Lutheran University

Zone 14

University of Wyoming

Zone 16

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

Zone 17

Central Washington University
Washington State University

Zone 18

California Lutheran University
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona
California State University, Long Beach
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

NOTABLE CHAPTERS**Zone 1**

Fairfield University
Smith College

Zone 2

Hamilton College
Hofstra University
Ithaca College
State University of New York College at New Paltz
Syracuse University

Zone 3

Drexel University
Lehigh University
Millersville University
Pennsylvania State University
Seton Hall University
West Chester University of Pennsylvania

Zone 4

American University
Georgetown University
Longwood University
Salisbury University

Zone 6

University of Central Florida

Zone 7

Albion College
Denison University
Gannon University
University of Michigan - Dearborn
Washington & Jefferson College
Wright State University

Zone 8

Murray State University

Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
University of Kentucky

Zone 10

Dillard University
Grambling State University
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
University of Southern Mississippi

Zone 11

University of Minnesota
University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Zone 13

LeTourneau University

Stephen F. Austin State University

Zone 14

Colorado Mesa University

Zone 15

Montana State University
Westminster University

Zone 16

Northern Arizona University

Zone 17

Gonzaga University
Highline College
University of Washington Bothell

2024–25 SPS Outstanding Chapter Advisor Award

The SPS Outstanding Chapter Advisor Award is the most prestigious award given each year by SPS. The following SPS advisors were nominated by their students, colleagues, and departments in recognition of their dedication to furthering the mission of SPS. The winner receives a total of \$6,000 for themselves, their chapter, and their department. Learn more at students.aip.org/outstanding-chapter-advisor-award-winners. Nominations for the award are due March 15th each year.

Winner:

Ronald Kumon, *Kettering University*

Nominees:

Brooke Hester, *Appalachian State University*
Adam Holley, *Tennessee Technological University*
Cyprian Lewandowski, *Florida State University*
Michael “Bodhi” Rogers, *University of Colorado Denver*
Jason Slinker, *University of Texas at Dallas*
Claudio Ugalde, *University of Illinois Chicago*

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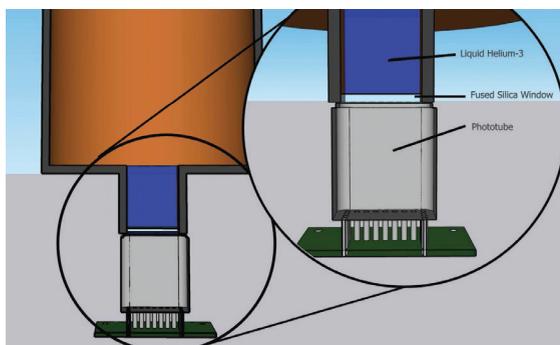
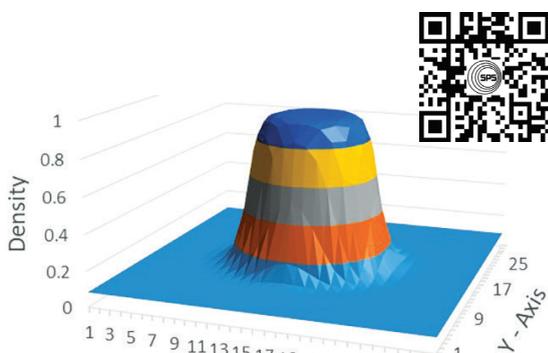
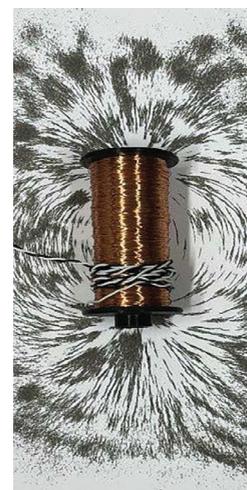
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